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**Putting the Brit into Eurohorror: exclusions and exchanges in the history of European horror cinema**

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**Abstract**

British horror cinema is often excluded from critical work dealing with European horror cinema or, as it is frequently referred to, 'Eurohorror'. This article argues that such exclusion is unwarranted. From the 1950s onwards there have been many exchanges between British and continental European-based horror production. These have involved not just international co-production deals but also creative personnel moving from country to country. In addition, British horror films have exerted influence on European horror cinema and vice versa. At the same time, the exclusion of British horror from the 'Eurohorror' category reveals limitations in that category, particularly its idealisation of continental European horror production.

Keywords: British horror; European horror; Eurohorror

Putting the Brit into Eurohorror: exclusions and exchanges in the history of European horror cinema

### The concept of Eurohorror

In 2007 the British Film Institute published, as part of its Screen Guide series, *100 European Horror Films* (Schneider).<sup>1</sup> Other Screen Guides have focused on traditional genres such as the western, science fiction, the musical and documentary, on non-Western products such as anime and Bollywood films, and on more critically constructed groupings, including cult films, film noir and road movies. Where precisely *100 European Horror Films* fits into this eclectic mix is not immediately clear. To date, it is the only volume in the series to take a traditional genre – horror – and inflect it geographically. Yet if one delves into the book, one finds that its sense of geography is on occasion decidedly idiosyncratic.

As one might expect, the majority of the book's 100 entries come from Western Europe, where most genre production has taken place throughout European film history – notably Italy (which dominates the book with thirty-eight entries) followed by Spain, Germany and France, with a smattering of entries from other European countries, including East European ones. But there are also three entries from Russia. One of these is *Dark Waters* (1994), a Russian/Italian production that was shot mainly in the Ukraine by an Italian director and which arguably merits inclusion as a marginal entry influenced by European practices (and in the interests of disclosure, I wrote the entry on this film largely from that perspective). However, the other two Russian entries, *The Viy* (1967) and *Night Watch* (2004), turn out to be wholly Russian in terms of funding and creative personnel.

While this extension of the category of European horror eastwards might surprise some readers, an accompanying reluctance to venture westwards is potentially yet more startling. Put bluntly, Russian horror is put into European horror, at least to a certain extent,

while British horror is excluded, with no wholly British horror film featuring anywhere in *100 European Horror Films*. The main reason why this particular exclusion might seem unwarranted is that the histories of British and continental European horror movements have often been seen by genre critics and historians as being entwined, especially in the late 1950s and early 1960s when an international cycle of Gothic horror films both dominated the horror market and helped to launch in particular both British and Italian horror cycles.<sup>2</sup> However, from another perspective, one that is expressed very clearly by *100 European Horror Films*, British horror is a much less welcome presence in the world of European horror, and indeed its exclusion helps to underpin in a fundamental way a sense of what European horror actually is.

In the face of this exclusion, this article seeks to identify and characterise the relationship between British horror cinema and European horror cinema, and in so doing it also explores a particular and influential critical understanding of European horror. It argues that the complexities associated with this relationship, such as it was in the past or is now, connect not just to the historical development of various national horror cinemas in Europe but also, perhaps more importantly, to how European horror cinema has been discussed, defined and discursively shaped since the 1980s. Throughout this period, the ways in which a wide range of European horror films have been circulated, received, interpreted and valued have undergone significant transformation.

To get a sense of what this transformation has entailed, it is worth returning to *100 European Horror Films*, and in particular its introduction. Here we find that the ‘European horror’ of the book’s title – which one might presume refers to horror films produced in Europe – has been replaced by the label ‘Eurohorror’. As the editor Steven Schneider puts it, “‘Eurohorror’ is a term that has been used primarily by reviewers and fans – and fans who are reviewers – to refer to post-1960 horror cinema emanating from Italy, Spain, France and,

to a lesser extent, Belgium, Germany and other European nations'.<sup>3</sup> It is clear from what follows that Eurohorror is primarily meant as a concept rather than just a geographical designation. It refers to a particular type or category of horror film that might have nationally specific inflections but which shares a range of characteristics and properties and which at the same time transcends national borders (hence the possibility of finding manifestations of it in Russia). While acknowledging the variety of formats within Eurohorror, Schneider characterises it thus: 'the films in question – whatever their subgenre – showcase a greater degree of explicit violence, sexuality and transgressive, alternative imagery than earlier examples of their form'.<sup>4</sup> He also notes that these are horror films 'that manage to be simultaneously artistic *and* generic, innovative and derivative, highbrow *and* lowbrow'.<sup>5</sup>

Comparable sentiments can be detected in a range of books, articles and reviews both from before and after the publication of *100 European Horror Films*. For example, Cathal Tohill and Pete Tombs' influential 1994 book *Immoral Tales: Sex and Horror Cinema in Europe 1956-1984* also finds extreme imagery, transgression and a challenge to traditional cultural hierarchies in these films which are 'too lowbrow to be considered arty, but too intelligent and personal to be described simply as Euro-trash'.<sup>6</sup> More recently, Ian Olney's *Euro horror: classic European horror cinema in contemporary American culture* has argued that 'the character of European art cinema is not so different from that of Euro horror cinema. Both tend to favour loosely structured plots and intense psychological subjectivity, and both push the envelope of what was then considered acceptable with regard to the onscreen depiction of sex and violence'.<sup>7</sup>

Running alongside this are frequent acknowledgements of the importance of fan cultures that emerge from the 1980s onwards – and associated terms such as cult and paracinema – and the recirculation of Eurohorror films on DVD and BluRay to the development of the Eurohorror category. However, the extent to which the category is itself

viewed as a critical construction imposed retrospectively on European horror cinema of the 1960s and 1970s or instead offered as a historical discovery of something that was visible at the time of these films' production and initial release is often left vague and unresolved.<sup>8</sup> Nevertheless, the attractiveness of Eurohorror for these critics seems to be that it offers experiences not found in what are usually presented as conservative or predictable mainstream forms of entertainment that are often associated with Anglo-American product. So for Tohill and Tombs, the European horror film of the 1960s and 1970s produced 'a tidal wave of celluloid weirdness that was destined to look even more shocking and irrational when it hit countries like England and the U.S.A.';<sup>9</sup> while Olney notes that 'there are certain shared formal and narrative characteristics that set classic European horror movies apart from contemporaneous British and American horror movies'.<sup>10</sup>

It appears, then, that British horror is necessarily located outside Eurohorror because, for reasons that are never really made clear, it intrinsically lacks the transgressive delights of continental European horror films. This might be a surprise to those critics who found iconoclastic and shocking qualities in Hammer's original gothic horrors of the late 1950s and early 1960s, or to later film historians who found yet further innovative and challenging work in 1970s British horror.<sup>11</sup> But there you have it. No British horror shows up in *100 European Horror Films*, while the one British film to feature in Mathijs and Mendik's similarly themed 2004 collection *Alternative Europe: Eurotrash and Exploitation Cinema since 1945* is the unreleased and obscure *Queen Kong* (1976).<sup>12</sup> One might have thought that I. Q. Hunter's recent book *British Trash Cinema* would have challenged this exclusion. However, Hunter's account maintains the separation of the British from the European and the erotic transgression associated with the latter: 'British trash cinema is arguably distinct from the disreputable cult cinema of the US and continental Europe... Although this book trolls through a cinema of transgression, not all of it is a wild ride into excess, subversion and lurid erotic defiance.

British trash is also, and perhaps mostly, a cinema of routine underachievement, of stupid sub-B movies, austerity thrillers, unfunny comedies and failed grabs at naughtiness'.<sup>13</sup>

As I have suggested elsewhere, the Eurohorror approach has certainly been productive and effective in bringing to critical attention a wide range of hitherto obscure films.<sup>14</sup> At the same time, it does raise issues, to put it mildly. Not least of these is the relation between national horror styles or schools within Europe (however one defines Europe) and what in Eurohorror sometimes appears to be a vague pan-continental conceptualisation of a generic identity. Coupled with this is a seemingly simplistic notion of the mainstream, against which the delightful excesses of Eurohorror tend to get defined. A striking feature of Eurohorror-based criticism in this regard is that most of it has been generated by British and American critics and fans rather than by continental Europeans (and indeed the majority of the contributors to *100 European Horror Films* are British or American), to the extent that 'Eurohorror' can reasonably be considered as primarily an Anglo-American concept, one that is predicated on there being a distance between the films concerned and the home culture of the critics invested in those films. As a concept, it is therefore reliant on notions of the exotic and the foreign, on there being something out there that is a lot more exciting than whatever we have here, wherever here is.

A corollary of this is that Eurohorror films perceived as strange and transgressive by non-Europeans can sometimes seem considerably more mundane to the inhabitants of the countries that produced the films in question. Take the Italian *giallo*, for example. This is usually understood within the context of Eurohorror as a lurid and violent form of psychological or horror thriller, with the foreignness of the word arguably helping to denote an exotic distance from the quotidian. However, in Italy itself, *giallo*, which of course ceases here to be a foreign word, is instead a catch-all category for crime fiction in general.



Any assessment of the adequacy of Eurohorror as a concept necessarily involves thinking about European horror in terms of its historical development and the relation of Eurohorror to this history. Broadly speaking, there are two significant historical periods in European horror cinema, both of which arguably feature British input. The first period runs from the mid-1950s through to the mid-1980s, with a high volume of horror production evident throughout Europe, especially in Britain (if you want to think of that as part of Europe), Italy and Spain but elsewhere as well. After the mid-1980s, European (including, if you wish, British) horror production dwindles to virtually nothing before returning, in its second period, at around the turn of the millennium. (There is also a possible earlier period for European horror, a proto- or pre-horror moment in the 1920s and 1930s where, for example, art movements such as German Expressionism and surrealist cinema offer innovations that would subsequently be taken up in horror cinema, both in Europe and elsewhere, and to which British cinema contributes little).

It is interesting that much of the critical work on Eurohorror, and an associated exclusion of British horror, is founded on the first period – the 1950s through to the 1980s – and not the second. This is unfortunate given that British horror seems to fit much more comfortably with the rest of European horror during the second, more recent period and is generally more European-facing at that point in its development. This is particularly reflected in a number of co-production deals involving British and continental European countries – for example, *Creep* (2004), *Dog Soldiers* (2002), *Severance* (2006), *The Black Death* (2010) and *Resident Evil* (2002). International co-productions were common in continental European horror throughout the 1960s and 1970s but ones involving British companies in collaboration with Europe were much rarer. Some Anglo-German productions of Edgar Wallace thrillers that hover on the margins of the Eurohorror category, the Spanish-British co-production *Horror Express* (1972), the Anglo-German co-production *To the Devil*

*a Daughter* (1976) and the Anglo-French co-production of the telekinetic thriller *The Medusa Touch* (1978) are the only ones that spring to mind, with the British instead tending to seek out co-production deals with American companies.

Perhaps more importantly, the kind of European horror that emerges during the contemporary period largely comes out of the same internationalised fan-based culture that much of Eurohorror criticism comes out of as well. These film-makers, be they Spanish, French or British, often self-identify as horror fans, have been influenced by the same internationally eclectic band of older cult horror films, and define their own work in relation to this material. In fact, one can argue that many of the new British horror films have more in common with continental European or American horror films than they do with older forms of British horror cinema. For examples, one can look to *Shaun of the Dead* (2004), which exudes a nostalgic regard for both American and Italian versions of the zombie movie, as well as rural/survival horrors such as *The Descent* (2005), *Doghouse* (2009), *Eden Lake* (2008), *Severance* and *Wilderness* (2006), all of which draw upon non-British sources for inspiration as much as they do British ones. National differences are still important, and not just in Britain but in other sites of horror production such as France, Spain and Sweden, but arguably more as a form of product differentiation within international markets organised around particular generic formats. In this sense, horror productions within Britain and Europe might have nationally distinctive qualities but are generally operating in relation to similar frameworks and understandings of what horror cinema is.<sup>15</sup>

It follows that the separation out of British horror from the excesses of the Eurohorror category, while operative in the contemporary scene, emerges from what is primarily a retrospective mapping of European horror cinema of the 1960s, 1970s and 1980s. Yet in historical terms this period does contain a series of exchanges or connections between the British film industry and various continental European film industries so far as horror

production is concerned. But what is the significance of these for any assessment of a Eurohorror category that excludes British horror?

### British horror into Europe (and vice versa)

Most obviously, relationships here can involve cross-border influence and emulation, the movement of creative personnel between countries, and financial co-production deals that cut across national borders. Potentially, they can also be characterised in terms of parallel activity, with different national cinemas producing similar kinds of film even if there is no evidence of any direct international connections underpinning these. So far as influence and emulation are concerned, an important factor is the international circulation of British and continental-European horror films.

From 1957, with the release of Hammer's first colour gothic production *The Curse of Frankenstein*, to the mid-1960s, the British Hammer company was the main international market leader in horror, and the commercial success enjoyed by its films in many countries inspired an international cycle of period horror productions, especially in Europe. No matter how much one wants to argue that the European gothic horrors of the 1960s were different from their British counterparts, aesthetically or ideologically, they were at the very least acutely aware of the British product. It is therefore unsurprising that British actors started showing up in European gothic horror films during the 1960s – for example, the established British horror star Christopher Lee who worked on horror projects in Germany, Italy and Spain, or Robert Flemyng who starred in Riccardo Freda's Italian horror *The Terror of Dr Hichcock* (1962). Perhaps the best-known British horror export to the continent in the early 1960s was, of course, Barbara Steele, a minor starlet for the Rank Organisation in the late 1950s who, once in Italy, became a major and iconic horror star following her first horror film, Mario Bava's *The Mask of Satan* (1960). She came to embody the perverse, necrophile

delights of 1960s Italian gothic cinema in a series of Italian horror films but, in an international career, also appeared in British and American horror films.

This export of British talent can be seen as supporting, at some levels at least, an attempted emulation of an Anglo version of horror – hence Steele and another British actor John Richardson as the stars of *The Mask of Satan*, the first commercially successful Italian horror film (and indeed European horror film); hence also the adoption by many European film-makers, particularly in Italy, of British-sounding pseudonyms, with, for example, Mario Bava becoming John M. Old, Riccardo Freda transforming himself into Robert Hampton and Antonio Margheriti becoming Anthony M. Dawson. It is now commonly assumed that these attempts at Anglicisation were decidedly half-hearted and did not convince anyone. Indeed, British and American reviews of these films on their initial release usually identified them as Italian imports (although the *New York Times* review of *The Mask of Satan* – which was released in the US as *Black Sunday* – managed to mistake the film for ‘a British-made melodrama’<sup>16</sup>), although, importantly, not really ones that were fundamentally or significantly different from the British product.

Directors too were moving between Britain and Europe in the 1960s and 1970s, but less frequently than actors. British horror directors Terence Fisher, Freddie Francis and Michael Armstrong all worked in Germany, the latter on the notorious *Mark of the Devil* (1970), a film that does merit an entry in *100 European Horror Films*. The young British filmmaker Michael Reeves began his directing career in Italy with *Revenge of the Blood Beast* (1966) before returning to Britain to make *The Sorcerers* (1967) and *Witchfinder General* (1968), the latter a significant influence on *Mark of the Devil*.

Continental European directors were coming to Britain as well, mainly during the 1970s. There were flying visits from the Spaniard Jorge Grau, who shot location material for the Eurohorror classic *The Living Dead at the Manchester Morgue* (1974), from the Spanish-

based, Argentinian-born Leon Klimovsky to shoot scenes for the Paul Naschy vehicle *Dr Jekyll versus the Werewolf* (1972), and from Italian horror maestro Lucio Fulci for sequences in his giallo *A Lizard in a Woman's Skin* (1971). Spanish director Jose Larraz experienced a longer stay in Britain, with his striking 1974 horror film *Vampyres* featuring a predominantly British cast and crew. Unsurprisingly, Tohill and Tombs have viewed Larraz's British films as in essence continental European films in exile, primarily because of their dream-like and erotic qualities which are viewed as antithetical to everything that British horror represents.<sup>17</sup> Similarly, the account of *The Living Dead at the Manchester Morgue* in *100 European Horror Films* – where it is discussed as an Spanish/Italian production under an alternate title *Let Sleeping Corpses Lie* – makes little of its British setting, although the fact that the film, while mainly shot outside Britain, takes place in a 'foreign' location surely merits more discussion than it actually receives.<sup>18</sup> In any event, *Vampyres* in particular can also be seen as fitting well into a British horror cycle that during the 1970s was becoming noticeably looser and both more exploitative and more experimental.<sup>19</sup>

It is not difficult to find other instances of cross-Channel influence or of a blurring between British and European forms of horror. For example, Adam Locks has traced the influence of Dario Argento's *Suspria* (1977) on some of the 1970s work of British director Norman J. Warren, especially *Terror* (1978), and one might also detect some *Suspria*-like qualities in the British horror film *The Legacy* (1978).<sup>20</sup> In both *Terror* and *The Legacy* moments of stylisation and design strongly reminiscent of Argento's film mingle with recognisably British settings and characterisations in a manner that suggests at the very least that different kinds of horror can co-exist with each other. In a different way, Hammer's Karnstein trilogy – which included *The Vampire Lovers* (1970), *Lust for a Vampire* (1970) and *Twins of Evil* (1971), all scripted by Tudor Gates who had earlier worked with Mario

Bava and featuring European actresses as their leads – can credibly be placed alongside other continental horror films as part of a 1970s ‘sex vampire’ horror cycle.<sup>21</sup>

It seems clear from this that British horror was not hermetically sealed off from the continental versions of the genre, or vice versa. One might go further and argue that British horror in the 1960s and 1970s was, certainly in commercial terms but also to some degree creatively as well, a part of an European horror mix, at some points a market leader, at other points emulating or running parallel with European developments, or simply going its own distinctive way. This helps to explain the continued presence of British actors in Spanish and especially Italian horrors in the 1970s and 1980s, decades in which British horror itself was by no means the commercial force that it had been during the 1960s. Such actors included, amongst others, Judy Geeson (in the 1973 Spanish production *Candle for the Devil*), Richard Johnson (in the Italian horrors *The Devil Within Her* (1974), *The Night Child* (1975) and *Zombie Flesh Eaters* (1979)), Suzy Kendall (the Italian productions *The Bird with the Crystal Plumage* (1970), *Torso* (1973), *Spasmo* (1974)), Catriona MacColl (Lucio Fulci’s Italian horrors *City of the Living Dead* (1980), *The Beyond* (1981), and *The House by the Cemetery* (1981)), and Ian McCulloch (*Zombie Flesh Eaters*, *Zombie Holocaust* (1980), *Contamination* (1980)). Only rarely is anything made of their Britishness in these films. Instead they are best seen as belonging to what by the 1970s had become a fully internationalised, indeed global, melange of talent that existed both before and behind the camera throughout European exploitation cinema.

Even within such a context, however, a fascination with other countries and associated notions of the foreign is evident throughout this whole period of British and continental European horror production, with this often going beyond commerce-driven attempts to copy the genre films coming out of those other countries. This article has already pointed out that a sense of foreignness, of there being a gap between the home culture of a

film and another culture, is an important element in some of the continental European horror films of this period. It is worth remembering in this regard that most of the original Hammer horrors were set in continental Europe and tended to render in exotic terms those settings in a manner that might actually be seen as anticipating the ways in which critics and fans subsequently responded to European horror films, in terms of distance, strangeness and mystery. To this end, Sue Harper has noted that for Hammer a sense of ‘European-ness’ permitted fantasy-based landscapes in a manner that more familiar British landscapes did not, ‘as a means of signifying an unknown geographical space where myths and archetypes might be made flesh’.<sup>22</sup>

By the same token, some of the later incursions from continental Europe into Britain reflected a continental fascination with Britain that went beyond any attempts to emulate Hammer in commercial terms. As previously noted, Eurohorror discourses of Anglo-American origin often endow the cultures of other countries with an exotic allure, but there is no reason to assume that this exoticisation cannot be directed back from those countries. Certainly there is a powerful sense in some European horror and *giallo* films – including *All the Colours of the Dark* (1972), *Cold Eyes of Fear* (1971), *Dr Jekyll versus the Werewolf* and *A Lizard in a Woman’s Skin* – that London in particular has become, not unlike Hammer’s version of Europe, a strange, mysterious and alluring location and an appropriate site for fantasy. Additionally, as noted by several critics, *giallo* films often featured non-Italian characters as their protagonists, even when the films were set in Italy. One can also reference the German Edgar Wallace thrillers of the 1960s and 1970s in this regard, which clearly anticipated the Italian *giallo* (with some *gialli* marketed in Germany as Edgar Wallace thrillers) and which were nearly always set in Britain and were often partly filmed there as well. In fact, two of these – *Circus of Fear* (1966) and *The Trygon Factor* (1966) – turn out to be Anglo-German productions featuring a mix of British and German actors.<sup>23</sup>

At the very least this brief account of exchanges and journeys between Great Britain and continental Europe suggests that what might be viewed as the transgressive purity of Eurohorror has regularly been sullied by British blood, while British horror has itself on occasion exhibited some continental-like elements. There is no obvious continuity to this, however, and it has happened in different ways at different times. Indeed perhaps the best way to view this area is through a focus on specific instances or relationships and, where appropriate, the economic structures that underpin these. Elsewhere I have argued that it can be productive to view European horror cinema not as a singular entity, not in fact as ‘Eurohorror’ at all, but rather as a complex set of relationships and associations operative within and across various national borders.<sup>24</sup> From such a perspective, confronting the Eurohorror category with some of the messy contingencies of actual Euro-British horror production can help to open up that category to a more historicised scrutiny of the genre, especially as it existed from the 1950s through to the 1980s.

A final example of Channel-crossing Euro-Brit activity is useful here, partly because it offers a particular challenge to the identity of Eurohorror but also because it returns us to the *giallo*, which is a key Eurohorror format (with seventeen of the titles in *100 European Horror Films Italian* turning out to be *giallo* films). It relates to the British actress Suzy Kendall who, alongside her British and American film credits, appeared during the 1970s in three Italian *giallo* films by noted Eurohorror directors, Dario Argento’s *The Bird with the Crystal Plumage* (1970), Sergio Martino’s *Torso* (1973) and Umberto Lenzi’s *Spasmo* (1974).

Amidst this apparently exotic activity, Kendall also starred in the British thriller *Assault* (1970), a film which features some decidedly *giallo*-like qualities – including sexualised violence and nudity, an eye-witness to murder (played by Kendall) who does not understand what exactly she has witnessed, and a killer who wears black gloves. In their



study of 1970s British horror cinema, Fenton and Flint disparage the film thus: ‘At a stretch, *Assault* could be described as a British *giallo* – the Italian thriller form which achieved its peak of international success in the early Seventies – but whilst imitating the form’s conventions it is doggedly devoid of the delirious excesses which true *gialli* embrace’.<sup>25</sup>

Here we have an all too familiar juxtaposition of plodding British dullness and delightful Euro-excess that is emphasised through Suzy Kendall’s presence linking them together, but at the same time, interestingly, we are presented with *giallo* not really as a descriptive category but more as an evaluative or qualitative one: all true *gialli* embrace excess, it seems, and that is a good thing. In the face of what seems a self-evident idealisation of the *giallo* format, one can argue that many films thought of now as Italian *giallo* are not particularly distinguished or excessive (however one defines excess), and whatever one makes of *Assault* as a film, it is clearly deploying conventions also deployed by many *gialli*. There is no evidence in this case that this was intentionally an attempt to emulate an Italian format, and in fact *Assault* fits perfectly well into a 1970s cycle of British ‘women-in-peril’ films that includes a range of other *giallo*-like moments.<sup>26</sup> In the same vein albeit more positive in tone, Philippe Met has also identified as gialloesque Nic Roeg’s *Don’t Look Now* (1973), a British production set mainly in Venice, and Alfred Sole’s American horror film *Alice, Sweet Alice* (1976), although he seems frustrated by the fact that Sole in particular does not acknowledge any debt to or even knowledge of the Italian *giallo* film.<sup>27</sup>

However, the very idea of the British *giallo*, or the non-Italian or even non-European *giallo*, is arguably more productively thought of as a provocation, as an idea that has the power to disrupt a category which can be seen, not unlike Eurohorror itself, as an Anglo-American categorisation imposed retrospectively on what is actually a very loose grouping of Italian thrillers made mainly during the 1970s and 1980s. In such a context, Suzy Kendall’s border-crossing presence alerts us to the fact that the *giallo* as defined since the 1980s might

not be as unique a form as is sometimes supposed in Eurohorror criticism and that comparable sensationalist thrillers can be found in many national cinemas during this period, and not just in European ones.

Suzy Kendall shows up again in *Berberian Sound Studio* (2012), Peter Strickland's feature-length homage to Italian horror, or at least her voice does; she is billed as 'Special Guest Screamer'. Strickland's film is one of three recent productions that appear to have bought into many of the ideas associated with Eurohorror through a nostalgic engagement with 1970s European horror; the others are H       Cattet and Bruno Forzani's *Amer* (2009) and *The Strange Colour of Your Body's Tears* (2013), both of which fixate on the *giallo*. *Berberian Sound Studio* is a British production, filmed in Britain but set in an Italian sound studio during the 1970s and it features an internationally eclectic cast that would not shame a 1970s Italian horror film. Superficially it seems to offer yet again the Eurohorror juxtaposition of British up-tightness – embodied by an English sound engineer (played by Toby Jones) who has travelled to Italy to work on a *Suspiria*-like horror film – and European excess, which is represented not just by the very violent film within the film but by the mysterious, emotional and sexualised activities of the film's continental European characters. However, the film gradually breaks down these distinctions between the British and the European, finding disturbing parallels between them, and in some scenes having the monolingual sound engineer inexplicably acquire fluency in the Italian language. *Berberian Sound Studio*'s ambiguous conclusion, in which the engineer stands transfixed before a flickering cinema screen, suggests both a collapse of his identity and of all the national distinctions set out so clearly at the film's beginning. In a film that takes us deep into the subjectivity of its British protagonist, one might argue that Eurohorror emerges from this as a crazed British dream.

Suzy Kendall is the only other Brit in this film, and as a Brit in Europe stands as a kind of double for the sound engineer. Heard but not seen, her casting is both iconic and historical, linking *Berberian Sound Studio* to Eurohorror – with two of Kendall’s Italian films featured in *100 European Horror Films* – but also connecting it directly to 1970s Italian horror and *giallo*. In effect, her career journey through British and Italian cinema, like that of the film’s sound engineer, has created connections that sometimes can be used to support the Eurohorror category but which can also throw that category into question, showing it up as unduly hermetic and susceptible to disintegration. It is therefore appropriate that Kendall, who was present at the highpoint of the production of *giallo*, Eurohorror’s favourite format, shows up at what in *Berberian Sound Studio* looks a lot like Eurohorror’s collapse into disordered fantasy and chaos.

This chapter began by noting the absence of British horror cinema from *100 European Horror Films*. It should now be clear that just adding a few British horror films to the list is not the point. Instead bringing British cinema into Eurohorror destabilises the whole category and reveals its founding assumptions about what is valuable, not just about the cultures of others but also about one’s home culture. It is worth noting that Eurohorror as a significant category might have been developed mainly by Anglo-American critics but it is now accepted as a discourse by some Europe-based critics, who also contribute to *100 European Horror Films*. However, there is more to be said about European horror cinema than can be said from a Eurohorror perspective. There is profit in going back before the discursive reshaping of European horror that has taken place from the 1980s onwards and discovering the economic and creative interactions and associations evident across a range of national sites of production in all their messy and contingent detail. This article contends that such an approach has the potential to produce not just enhanced nuance and historical awareness but also new sets of challenges about how we understand and value the kinds of

horror films being made in Europe from the 1950s through to the 1980s. Needless to say, Great Britain will be present throughout.

## NOTES

- 1 S. J. Schneider (ed.), *100 European Horror Films*, British Film Institute, 2007.
- 2 For a relevant discussion of horror cinema's 'gothic revival', see R. Worland, 'The Gothic Revival (1957-1974)' in H. M. Benshoff (ed.), *A Companion to the Horror Film*, Wiley-Blackwell, 2014, pp. 273-91.
- 3 *100 European Horror Films*, p. xx.
- 4 *100 European Horror Films*, p. xxi.
- 5 *100 European Horror Films*, p. xxii.
- 6 C. Tohill and P. Tombs, *Immoral Tales: Sex and Horror Cinema in Europe 1956-1984*, Primitive Press, 1994, p. 5.
- 7 I. Olney, *Euro horror: classic European horror cinema in contemporary American culture*, Indiana University Press, 2013, pp. 7-8.
- 8 For a fuller discussion of this, see P. Hutchings, 'Resident Evil: The Limits of European Horror' in P. Allmer, E. Brick and D. Huxley (eds.), *European Nightmares: Horror Cinema in Europe since 1946*, Wallflower Press, 2012, pp. 13-23.
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- 10 *Euro horror: classic European horror cinema in contemporary American culture*, p. 47.
- 11 For example, see S. Chibnall, *Making Mischief: The Cult Films of Pete Walker*, Fab Press, 1998.
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14 'Resident Evil: The Limits of European Horror'.

15 For more on this, see P. Hutchings, 'Northern Darkness: the curious case of the Swedish vampire' in L. Hunt, S. Lockyer and M. Williamson (eds.), *Screening the Undead: Vampires and Zombies in Film and Television*, I. B. Tauris, 2014, pp. 54-70.

16 *New York Times*, 8 March 1961, p. 37.

17 *Immoral Tales: Sex and Horror Cinema in Europe 1956-1984*, pp. 193-207.

18 *100 European Horror Films*, pp. 133-4.

19 See, for example, the account of the film in H. Fenton and D. Flint (eds.), *Ten Years of Terror: British Horror Films of the 1970s*, FAB Press, 2001, pp. 222-4. While acknowledging the director's non-Britishness, this emphasises heavily the film's British elements.

20 A. Locks, 'Anglo Argento: A Critical Reassessment of the films of Norman J. Warren', in L. Foster and S. Harper (eds.), *British culture and society in the 1970s: the lost decade*. Cambridge Scholars Press, 2010, pp. 213-24.

21 For example, see D. Pirie, *The Vampire Cinema*, Galley Press, 1977, pp. 96-123.

22 S. Harper, 'Beyond the forest: Terence Fisher and Transylvania' in *Studies in European Cinema*, 3:2, 2006, p. 144. One might also put this in a broader cultural-historical context, with many classic British gothic novels of the 18<sup>th</sup> and 19<sup>th</sup> centuries set in continental Europe.

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24 'Resident Evil: The Limits of European Horror'.

25 *Ten Years of Terror: British Horror Films of the 1970s*, p. 13.

26 For a discussion of these other British films, see P. Hutchings, “‘I’m the girl he wants to kill’: The ‘women in peril’ thriller in 1970s British film and television’ in *Visual Culture in Britain*, 10:1, 2009, pp. 53-69

27 P. Met, “‘Knowing Too Much’ about Hitchcock: The genesis of the Italian giallo’ in D. Boyd and R. B. Palmer (eds.) *After Hitchcock: Influence, Imitation, and Intertextuality*, University of Texas Press, 2006, p. 196.